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Gentlemen:

I am enclosing my comments on the draft regulations for IAA:

IV The Intercountry Adoption Act of 2000 (IAA)

B Overview of Substantive Provisions and E. Economic Impact/Effect on Small Entities

Concerns: I agree with moving toward mandatory accreditation, but, as a small agency, we are very concerned about increased costs for agencies of the accreditation process, as well as insurance costs. We are concerned about the impact on small agencies, as well as the possibility of all agencies having to pass on additional costs, resulting already expensive adoptions further costly.

4. Subpart F—Standards for Convention Accreditation and Approval Section 96.35: Suitability of Agencies and Persons to Provide Adoption Section 96.43 Case Tracking, Data Management, and Reporting; (Also appropriate for Ethical Practices and Responsibilities, 96.35)

Comments: The regulations should make it a requirement that agencies disclose if they have ever operated under a different name or if the principals in that agency ever worked with other agencies. There have been cases of unethical agencies relocating and setting up under a different name and/or agency personnel opening up new businesses—sometimes in the same town—under a different name. Hague requirements should expose a paper trail, not only of the agency but of the key names associated with it. This tracking of agencies, personnel, and overseas facilitators should be included.

— Application Procedures for Accreditation and Approval

Section 96.40 Fee Policies and Procedures:

Comments: Hague regs should prohibit direct cash transactions by adoptive parents to birth parents.

Section 96.49 Provision of Medical and Social Information in Incoming Cases:

Comments: It would be very helpful for the regulations to stipulate a standardized health and social history data collection and information sharing to guide the process for children and adoptive parents and to assist in better matching of children with appropriate adoptive parent resources best able to meet the needs of children.

13. Subpart M — Dissemination and Reporting of Information by Accrediting Entities:

Comments: Whenever the Department or accrediting agency takes action against an agency (suspension, cancellation, refusal to renew, corrective action, etc.) this action should be made public on the State Department website.

Financial Risk and Management
96.34 Compensation

Comments

d. A provision should be added to ensure that fees, wages or salaries be commensurate with the cost of living in sending country.

Agencies should also disclose to adoptive parents how the agency determines that a child is a genuine orphan and are appropriate for placement with a family in another country.

96.36 Prohibition on child buying

Comments: Direct cash transactions by adoptive parents to birth parents should not be allowed.

96.40 (3) Foreign country program expenses:

Comments: These expenses should be detailed. Foreign program fees vary wildly and it is not clear why. The need for transparency here is critical.

Thank you very much for considering these comments as you complete the regulations process.

Sincerely,



Leah C. O'Leary, LICSW, Executive Director
A Red Thread Adoption Services, Inc.